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HRP 89-2

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL DONOVAN

After studying Mr. Stimson's letter I find it consistent with a position firmly held by the Army, Navy, and State Departments with respect to the powers of the Director. You may be sure that at least these three Departments will adhere to their position and that the President will find it politically difficult to contest them.

The weakness in Secretary Stimson's position is his admission of complete agreement as to the objective sought and the necessity for coordination of the intelligence effort coupled with the illogical conclusion that no correctives should be implemented prior to the termination of hostilities. This weakness can be exploited to advantage quite apart from the main issue, the powers of the Director.

You have two principal courses of action:

- a. To proceed with the development of political pressures on the President stronger than those existing in four or more old-line departments

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and sufficient to defeat them on the issues of the independent directorate and the immediacy of establishment.

b. To present your views as to the advantages of the independence of the directorate, but stressing the vital necessity of immediate action--admitting a willingness to compromise on the former to attain the latter.

Despite your known desire to fight it out to "unconditional surrender" on a above, it is my personal belief that you will not be able to array sufficient pressure, in Congress or elsewhere, to cause the President to buck the line-up of department heads. In this course I foresee defeat for a national cause which is vital even if the whole objective is not attained.

If you should agree to choose course b, you would have many variations in your method of attack. You would disarm your opponents of all arguments other than the unsound one in which they declare themselves arbitrarily favorable to delaying needed action. This latter you could devastate.

You could revert to the paper agreed to by the JIC, and the paper of the JSSC which was mysteriously stopped

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short of the JCS. The strange circumstance of the exposure could be advantageously questioned.

Having acceded to the policy control of the three secretaries, many high ranking Army, Navy and State officials would go with you. You could personally win the most of them. Navy would be isolated in their obstructionism. FBI would automatically cease to be a factor. Finally, the President would not be forced to undertake a first-class scrap.

Having made it less difficult for the President and won his support, he could restore large powers to the director in his executive orders.

I recommend what to you is a pet abomination, namely, compromise as suggested in b above.

John Magruder, Brig. Gen.
Deputy Director, OSS
Intelligence Service

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WAR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON

May 1 1945

Major General William J. Donovan
Director, Office of Strategic Services,
Washington, D. C.

Dear General Donovan:

I received your memorandum of April 6th asking for comments upon the objectives and basic principles covered by your proposal for a central intelligence service.

This matter has received the most careful consideration in the War Department which is in entire agreement with the objective which you are seeking. Our differences, however, have to do with your method of reaching that objective.

From the War Department's point of view, it is vital that responsibility should not be separated from the authority to discharge this responsibility and since security against foreign aggression is the primary concern of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of War, and the Secretary of the Navy, it seems to me that the authority to carry out this responsibility should remain with them. The central intelligence service which you propose would subject departmental intelligence operations to the control of officers outside the Departments and not responsible to the heads of these Departments. This seems to me most inadvisable.

I agree entirely with you that coordination of the intelligence effort relating to national security must be attained, but I do not think the coordinating authority should engage in operations. The inevitable tendency would be to expand its operating functions at the expense of the operating agencies which have very definite responsibilities.

I believe, therefore, that methods of coordination and, where necessary, combined operations should be worked

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out directly by the Department heads who control the operating agencies and I believe that this can be done adequately and far better than has been the case in the past. Coordination of intelligence services is one of the factors to be considered in the general problem of a single Department of Defense.

For a proper system of coordination, I do not believe it either necessary or advisable to establish an independent agency or budget.

The Departments of State, War, Justice and the Navy have together examined the proposed central intelligence service and are in substantial agreement that it should not be considered prior to the termination of hostilities against Germany and Japan.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Henry L. Stimson
Secretary of War

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ABSTRACT

In his letter to General Donovan Mr. Stimson states he is in favor of creating a central intelligence service but he feels the action should not take place until World War II ends.

(Source document for HS-1, Chapter I, page 63.)

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